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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 3 November 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter from Fares Bouez, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lebanon, on the subject of the transportation of soil, by Israel, in the occupied territories in South Lebanon.

I have the honour to request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 40, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Samir MOUBARAK
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

[Original: Arabic]

Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lebanon addressed to the Secretary-General

Israeli forces in southern Lebanon have recently excavated hundreds of tons of soil in the occupied areas of Hasbayya and Urqub, using dozens of trucks and earth movers to transport it into Israeli territory for the purposes of reclaiming Israeli agricultural land, and thereby depriving Lebanese farmers of the soil from their lands. Prior to this, in the last few weeks, Israeli trucks have transported soil from the south of Mahel al-Dardarah and Marj al-Khayyam in the occupied area of Marj Uyun to an area on the Israeli side of the border.

This most recent act of aggression by Israel signals a new departure in Israel's practice of blatantly disregarding the rights of citizens and States. There can be no question that this is a shameless act of organized theft of the resources of an occupied area. It creates new circumstances on the ground by transforming agricultural areas into arid land. It inflicts environmental damage on the surrounding area and causes serious harm to the owners, whose land has been so transformed that they are no longer able to cultivate it and are forced to abandon it.

Lebanon requests that you intervene expeditiously with the Israeli authorities in order to put a stop to a deplorable practice which is becoming more frequent and persistent, and to ensure that Israel desists from its determined efforts to inflict harm on Lebanon and the Lebanese people.